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## **Sockeye Salmon Listed as Endangered Species**

The Federal Government listed the Snake River sockeye salmon an endangered species today, making it likely that some Columbia River water will be diverted from generating electricity, farming and shipping.

Just four of the fish returned to their ancestral spawning ground in Idaho this year.

"What this means now is that the region is going to be held accountable for protection of the sockeye salmon, and that is a legal accountability," said Bill Bakke of Oregon Trout, which has petitioned for listing other salmon species as well.

The National Marine Fisheries Service listed the Snake River sockeye as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, forcing the Government to act to save the fish from extinction.

"At one time, these fish were so abundant that Native Americans and early miners depended on them for food in several locations within the Snake River basin," the agency said in a statement in Washington, D.C. Long Trek Blocked by Dams

The designation of the salmon was not unexpected.

"The good news is that the region has been preparing itself for this listing for nearly a year and a half, and we are way ahead of the game," said Senator Mark Hatfield, Republican of Oregon.

Historically, more than 11 million salmon and steelhead swam the Columbia system each year, but the runs have dwindled to about 2.5 million fish. Many of them are now from hatcheries, and wild fish are at only 2 percent of their former levels.

Thousands of sockeye used to complete the 900-mile trek up the Columbia from the Pacific Ocean to spawn in Redfish Lake Creek in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains, but now eight Federally operated dams stand in their way.

The dams create hurdles for salmon migrating upstream. They also slow the water flows that once carried young salmon downstream to the Pacific Ocean in about two weeks. Now the trip takes much longer and the smolts' gills prematurely begin their adaptation from fresh to salt water before they reach the ocean.

Roddy Moscoso, a spokesman for the fisheries service, said only three females and one male returned to Redfish Lake Creek this year. None completed the trip last year, although others may still be living as the migration occurs in four- to five-year cycles.

Protection costs will remain unknown until the Government adopts a formal recovery plan, but efforts to save the sockeye will probably require increasing river flows by diverting water from current uses.

The Northwest Power Planning Council, which plans the power needs for Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, is considering its salmon-recovery plan this week during a meeting in Helena, Mont., and is expected to produce a final plan by mid-December.

Ed Mosey of the Columbia River Alliance, which represents dam operators, shippers, irrigators and industrial water users, said the salmon runs could be protected "without dramatic and widespread economic impacts." He said the recovery plan should be spread across all parties having an effect on the wild salmon, including commercial fisheries as well as water users.

Industry officials have recently said altering operation of the hydroelectric dams could mean electricity rates at the household level would rise 10 percent.

However, the power council estimates that \$70 million worth of water flow would be dedicated to fish annually, meaning rate increases would be limited to about 2 percent.